

Dr. Luke Kiersted House  
93 John Street  
Kingston  
Ulster County  
New York

HABS No. NY-5559

HABS,  
NY,  
56-KING,  
14-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20243

## DR. LUKE KIERSTED HOUSE

Location: 93 John Street, Kingston, Ulster County, New York.  
Latitude 41° 56' 01" Longitude 74° 01' 21"

HABS  
NY  
56-KING  
14-

Present Owner: Urban Renewal.

Present Occupant: Smith Printing and Mailing Service

Present Use: Offset printing service.

Significance: This is an example of a frame house built around the late eighteenth century during the transition between pre-Revolution building styles and Federal houses.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The house was built after 1777.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Dr. Luke Kiersted lost a barn and house in the conflagration of Kingston in 1777 by the British Army. Schoonmaker (Schoonmaker, Marius, The History of Kingston, New York, page 446) is unclear whether or not Kiersted owned the property at Green and John Streets at the time of the Revolution. A deed to a neighboring lot in 1803 (liber 17, page 256), however, shows that he was established there by that time. The first positive reference to the house is in 1821 when Kiersted wrote his will.

1821 Will written 24 October 1821, Proved 18 October 1826  
liber E of wills, page 300  
Dr. Luke Kiersted  
to  
Catherine Kiersted, and  
Sally Kiersted, his daughters  
"...The house and lot now occupied and  
possessed by me..."

1849 Deed 1 May 1849, Recorded 18 May 1849  
liber 73, page 73  
Catherine Kiersted  
Sarah Kiersted  
to  
William Cockburn.

1863 Deed 6 April 1863, Recorded 9 April 1863  
liber 123, page 11  
Howard Cockburn  
William Cockburn  
Elizabeth P. Cockburn, his wife  
to  
Benjamin P. Davis

- 1865 Deed 18 July 1865, Recorded 25 July 1865  
liber 132, page 68  
Sally Davis, widow of  
Benjamin P. Davis, deceased  
to  
Peter B. Davis,  
Joseph Davis,  
Christopher Davis,  
John W. Davis, and  
Eliza Kerr, children of Benjamin and Sally  
Davis
- 1865 Deed 9 December 1865, Recorded 7 August 1866  
liber 138, page 180  
Peter B. Davis and Maria Davis, his wife  
Joseph Davis and Gertrude Davis, his wife  
Christopher Davis and Hepzibah Davis, his wife  
John W. Davis and Caroline Davis, his wife  
to  
Eliza D. Kerr, wife of John W. Kerr
- 1921 Deed 25 June 1921, Recorded 20 September 1921  
liber 484, page 371  
Mary K. Hoar  
Ella K. DeWitt  
Letitia K. Warren  
Minnie Degarmo  
Charles Kerr and Elizabeth F. Kerr, his wife  
John K. L. Ross and Ethel A. Ross, his wife,  
heirs of Eliza D. Kerr  
to  
Ida I. Kerr
- 1937 Will written 22 January 1937, Proved  
9 January 1939  
liber 17 of wills, page 408  
Ida I. Kerr, deceased  
to  
Letitia K. Warren, her sister  
"...my house and property situate on the  
corner of John St. and Green St., Kingston,  
N.Y., at one time the old family homestead."
- 1945 Will written 14 June 1945, Proved 10  
February 1948  
liber 21 of wills, page 375  
Letitia K. Warren, deceased  
to  
Clarence Hasbrouck Harris
- 1951 Deed 24 January 1951, Recorded 24 January  
1951  
liber 789, page 181  
Clarence H. Harris  
to

Salvatore J. Aprea  
Emma Aprea, his wife

1953 Deed 1 April 1953, Recorded 1 April 1953  
liber 853, page 231  
Salvatore J. Aprea  
Emma Aprea, his wife  
to  
Warren F. Smith  
Edith G. Smith

1960 Will written 13 September 1960, Proved  
15 July 1965  
liber 47 of wills, page 718  
Warren F. Smith  
to  
Edith G. Smith

1968 Deed 8 January 1968, Recorded 10 January  
1968  
liber 1207, page 245  
Edith G. Smith  
to  
Kingston Urban Renewal Agency

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Not known.
5. Original plan and construction: The house was originally a rectangle under a gable roof. It had two rooms on the first floor; flanking a central hall. The original kitchen was in the east end of the basement. Before the first lean-to addition was added at the rear, the basement stairs, whose treads show signs of many years of heavy use, had direct access to the central hall through a door to the left at the top of the stairs.
6. Alterations and additions: The lean-to addition at the rear of the house was probably added about the mid-nineteenth century, judging from its construction. A northwest extension and a northeast ell have been added to the lean-to more recently. A double doorway has been added to the front of the building, probably in the 1890s when the house was converted to apartments.

The main stairway to the second floor appears to have been changed at the upper level. The short upper flight has been moved to abut the main flight, to accomodate a closet. It is unknown when this alteration was made.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Dr. Luke Kiersted was a prominent physician in Kingston after the Revolution (Schoonmaker, page 446).

John W. Kerr was a harness maker and, during the 1870s, a sheriff (Kingston Directories, 1866-1900). After 1893, the Kerrs moved from John Street and rented the house as apartments, a practice that has continued to the present.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deeds, County Clerk's Office, Ulster County Office Building, Kingston, New York.

Wills, Surrogate's Office, Ulster County Office Building, Kingston, New York.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Hoes, Rosewell Randall, ed. Baptismal and Marriage Registers of the Old Dutch Church of Kingston. New York: 1891.

Hoes, Roswell Randall. Notes on early lots, Senate House Museum, Kingston, New York.

Map of Ulster County. Philadelphia: Taintor, Dawson and Company, 1858.

Olde Ulster. Kingston, New York: 1902-1914.

Schoonmaker, Marius. The History of Kingston, New York. New York: 1888.

Sylvester, Nathaniel Bartlett. History of Ulster County, New York. Philadelphia: 1880.

Prepared by William C. Badger  
Historian  
Historic American  
Buildings  
Survey  
Summer 1972

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is an example of a late eighteenth century frame house with early Federal detailing.
2. Condition of fabric: The overall condition of the house is good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions:

The original house is 42'-3" (five-bay front) x 24' - 3" and is two stories. As previously mentioned, a lean-to addition abuts the rear of the house. The northwest and northeast appendages were later added to the rear of the lean-to.

2. Foundations: The house sits on a stone rubble foundation.

3. Wall construction, finish and color: The entire house is frame sheathed in clapboard and shiplap. In the front the 8" x 8" studs are filled with brick nogging. This is visible in the attic. The off-white painted clapboard varies in size from one addition to another. In the front section and in the lean-to addition it has a dressed bead. The later additions have shiplap siding. Fireplace bricks are exposed at the bottom on the west. The exposed fireplace end on the east is stone.

4. Structural system: Both outside and inside walls are wood frame construction. Simple wooden truss supports roof with no ridge member.

5. Porches, Stoop: There is a large bluestone stoop to the sidewalk level from the main doorway. A metal scraper is on either end of the stoop. The northeast ell has a porch at the second floor level with a modern wooden stair leading to the ground. This stair is masked off with modern lattice work.

6. Chimneys: There are two brick chimneys at either end of the gables of the original section of the house. The base of the southeast chimney is stone and the base of northwest chimney is brick.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance is recessed and contains two separate, four-paneled doors with a transom above each one. There is a modern, twelve lighted, paneled door of wood in the rear of the house and a paneled door that leads to the second floor porch from the northeast ell.

b. Windows and shutters: There are wooden double hung windows on the front of the house which have two-over-two light sash.

Windows on the east elevation have six-over-six light sash in two sizes. The same size windows are repeated on the west side, however, some of the sash has been replaced with two-over-two sash lights. Windows on the back of the lean-to addition and the northeast ell are six-over-six light on second floor level and eight-over-eight light on the ground floor level. The shutters, found on the front elevation only, are flush paneled and are held in place by decorative shutter dogs and strap hinges.

8. Roof:

A gable roof with a dentiled cornice is at the front, and a sloped lean-to addition in the back with two gabled appendages. The entire roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: There is a cellar underneath the front portion of the house only. Stairs lead down to it from the lean-to addition. On the east wall is an original kitchen fireplace and an oven.
- b. First floor: The entrance to the house is divided into two door ways which now lead to two different apartments. There was at one time a large central hall with a stair and landing to the second floor. Two rooms, east and west, formed the main plan. At present the left entrance door leads into a smaller hall and into the lean-to addition. The west room is divided by a partition wall and the east room has been made into a storage room with a hall with two toilets and a dark room. The latter room contains an original mantel, fireplace, and paneling. The lean-to addition is one room across the back; the northwest extension is one room at the west end of the lean-to addition. The northeast ell has a one-room at the rear corner of the lean-to addition.
- c. Second floor: The second floor plans of the building are similar to that of the first floor. It originally consisted of two large bedrooms on either side of the upper stair hall. At the present the southeast bedroom is cut into two rooms with closets dividing them. There is a small front room between the bedrooms.

Behind the main block of the building is the upper lean-to, which is now divided into two rooms of equal size with a smaller room in the middle. Both the northeast ell and the northwest extension have upper rooms the same size as the first floor.

- d. Attic: The attic consists of one large space, which is unfinished. There is some flooring reused from other areas of the house.
  2. Stairways: As previously mentioned, the main stair, leading to the second floor and the attic, is now enclosed, however, it once was an open well, with an intermediate landing.
  3. Flooring: Most floors in the front part of the building are wide boards with linoleum covering. In some places a new tongue-and-groove floor has been added over the surface of the original floor. The lean-to addition has narrower board floors on the second floor and tongue-and-groove floors on the first floor.
  4. Wall and ceiling finish: Interior walls are wood studs with horizontal wood lath and plaster. In most rooms the original finish has been covered with wallpaper. There are patterned tin ceilings in the extension and the ell. Elsewhere there is wallpaper ceiling except in the east room which has finished plaster. Second floor southeast room has boxed beams and paneled ceiling.
  5. Doorways and doors: Paneled wooden doors in most rooms are set in simple molded frames. The most notable door in the house is the doorway from the hall to the first floor east room. This door has more prominently recessed panels and contains a bull's eye glass of bottle green color. An unattached door was found in the attic which has recessed panels and molding. No evidence exists as to where it might have been located, although it is an exterior door which appears to be of later vintage than the house itself. Several doors have strap hinges.
  6. Decorative trim: Remnants of molded chair-rail exist in the stair hall.
  7. Mechanical Equipment:
    - a. Heating: All original fireplaces are blocked up; they still exist in all four principal rooms. The house is now heated by an oil-burning furnace.
    - b. Lighting: Modern incandescent ceiling fixtures are found in all major rooms.
- D. Site: The house faces south on John Street at the intersection of Green Street.

Prepared by: William C. Badger  
Historian  
Historic American Buildings Survey  
Summer 1972



PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) under joint sponsorship of the National Park Service and the Kingston Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission with financial assistance from the New York Council on the Arts. Measured and drawn during the summer of 1972 under the direction of John Poppeliers, chief of HABS and under the supervision of Roy Eugene Graham (University of Texas at Austin) by student architects Philip D. Ward (University of Washington), A. Carol Boerder (University of Texas at Austin), M. Morgan Gick (University of Notre Dame), and Stephen O. Fildes (Texas Tech University). The drawings were edited in December 1972 by architect John Burns. The written architectural and historical data was prepared by William C. Badger (University of Pennsylvania), the project historian, and edited in January 1980 by Susan McCown, a historian in the HABS office. The photos were taken in August 1973 by Jack E. Boucher of HABS staff.